A Report on:

Drought Impacts in Faryab Province.

Faryab province is situated in northwestern Afghanistan bordering Juzjan and Seri Pul provinces to the east, Badghis to the west, Ghor to the south and Turkmenistan to the north of the province. The population of the province is estimated to be 400,000. Inhabitants of the province are composed of Uzbak, Turkmen, Tajik, Pushtoon and some Hazara ethnicity.

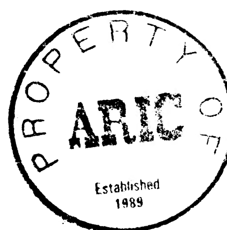
The province consists of the following districts: Andkhoi, Almar, Bala Murghab, Belchiragh, Daulat abad, Derzab, Maimana, Qaisar and Shireen Taqab. The area is semi-arid with dry weather and annual precipitation of 250 to 400 mm. The temperature rises to 45 degree Celsius in summer and drops to 25 degree below zero in the winter.

Agriculture, livestock and handicraft are the main occupation of the inhabitants of the province. The agriculture of the province is mostly rain-fed, although a small proportion of the land is irrigated through channels and spring system. Cereal crops some vegetables and fruits are the common agricultural products.
Livestock is the main occupation and main source of income in the province. It includes cattle, sheep, Karakul sheep, draft animal and poultry.

The handy craft such as carpet weaving and Kleem weaving is also practiced as a main source of income of Faryab people. The products are usually marketed in other provinces as well as outside Afghanistan. The raw materials used for this industry come from animal by-products.

Drought Impacts:
Faryab province experienced very severe drought since past thirty years. Very low precipitation during past 4, 5 years is the main cause of drought. The effect of drought in Faryab is more acute than other places of Afghanistan due to rain-fed cultivation. Since 90% of agricultural land in the province is rain-fed, the drought has disastrous impacts on economy, population movement, malnutrition and break up of epidemic diseases.

The rain-fed agricultural production was nil last year. Quantity of water in canals is very low providing nominal water for irrigation. So the yield of irrigated land substantially fell down. The water level in shallow wells also fell down and in a number of places they are dried. No water can be seen in the traditional water reservoirs (Kanda) which is usually use for drinking water and for livestock.



The graze lands in the province are mostly dried. Livestock are left with no water and no fodder crop. Therefore, the animal owners have sold them to the market in very low prices. Some animal owners have brought their animals to other provinces and countries with better grazing situation. Now very few animals are left in the province.

Population movement to other provinces and other countries are continuing since early last summer. Most of the youth in the province immigrated to other provinces or countries in search of employment and income.

The prices of essential commodities are increasing day by day.At the time of writing this report the following prices are reported.

S/N	Commodity	Price
1	Wheat for seven kg.	Afs.130,000
2	Rice for seven kg.	Afs. 260,000
3	Cooking oil per kg	Afs. 90,000
4	Sugar per kg.	Afs. 80,000
5	Lamb one kg.	Afs. 50,000
6	Tea for one kg	Afs 180,000

The prices of all essential commodities are very high for drought affected people who have been under pressure of war and uncertainty since long time. The people's purchasing power has already depleted. Most of the people sold their entire belongings even plowing and draft animals. Some people are compelled to sell their children so that they will be free of feeding them and save there lives.

Present living condition is very miserable and if it continues as such, the lives of thousands of inhabitants will be at risk. Although there is some sign of relieve due to the recent rain and snowfall in most parts of Afghanistan, but the fact that next year will also be under effect of current drought remains the same.

Due to the lack of wheat seed, oxen and uncertainty of weather condition most of the land in the province has not been sown. Therefore even with sufficient rain and snow fall there will be no agricultural products. Livestock situation is also remains unchanged. The services of few existing veterinary clinics are not sufficient for the need of people. Also they do not have the capability to purchase vaccine and medicine for their animals.

Malaria, measles, cholera and other diseases due malnutrition and cold weather are very common. The prices of medicine, which are sometimes over-dating and low quality, are beyond the purchasing capability of people. Existing health services compared to the demand of the area are very nominal.

Assistance Up-date:

Sufficient assistance to cope with the impacts of drought has not been provided by the aid community so far. However some assistance in the from of food distribution and food for work to dig shallow wells and water reservoir has been provided. These are emergency assistance, which has prompt relief effects.

Since the inhabitant of the areas are engaged in rain-fed agriculture and livestock raising, more attention are required to revive these sectors. No assistance has been provided to farmers and animal owners for such purposes.

Conclusion:

The displacement from highlands to cities, towns, other provinces and neighboring countries in Faryab is continuing .The process will speed up in the coming months and it will create another serious IDP crisis for aid community.

The purchasing power of the inhabitants of these provinces is already in desperate position due to unemployment, low level of production and inflation. Considering the consequences of drought the situation will be further deteriorated.

The present situation of the province is appalling and it is going to continue until next year even with vanishing of drought. Hence if proper intervention is not carried out it will end to disaster and further depopulation of the province. All attention has to be focused on discouraging the inhabitants from further displacement. At the same time those who are already displaced to other provinces should be encouraged to return to their origin of places through proper assistance and provision of employment.

The present population movement has already created serious problems. We have already witnessed the misery and calamities of IDPs and refugees in Heart, Mazar, Derqad (Dasht-I-Qala) in Takhar province and refugee camps in Jalozi and Shamshatoo.

The following measures are suggested to be taken by the aid community during the current year:

- Faryab should be declared by the aid community as one of the worst drought affected province.
- Emergency food distribution for most vulnerable families in all districts hit by recent drought should be undertaken.
- Projects with food for work component should be implemented. Irrigation, water supply, flood protection, road reconstruction and other urgently needed projects may be included in this program.
- Health facilities & services and medicines should be provided to the most needy inhabitants of the area.
- Procurement food for animals such as concentrated food should be undertaken.
- Veterinary services and vaccination to be provided for livestock on village level.
- Certain animal medicines should be distributed to the animal owners.
- Proper wheat seed and fertilizer to be distributed to the framers.

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